FY 2000 OAR External Affairs Operating Plan

1 Introduction

This plan is an internal document that identifies priorities and charts directions for the Outreach Committee of the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) Division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for FY 2000. The plan describes what the outreach committee is, how outreach contributes to NOAA's mission and what the various teams and subcommittees of the Outreach Committee will do in FY 2000. It is an extensive plan that builds on past efforts by compiling and elaborating upon individual subcommittee goals and includes monthly schedules and performance measures.

1.1 OAR Outreach Committee

The broad goal of outreach at OAR is to promote the communication and understanding of NOAA research by connecting NOAA science to its customers and the public. One of the ways in which OAR does this is through an Outreach Committee made up of outreach coordinators from each of the OAR programs and labs, public affairs officers, congressional and constituent affairs specialists, and an External Affairs Team. While many of members of the Committee are involved as an extension of their regular duties (i.e. Public Affairs Officers, EEO Specialists, etc.), most of the outreach coordinators do so in addition to their primary responsibilities in an effort to leverage resources. This network extends the products of NOAA research to the academic and scientific communities, to educators and the Nation, meeting the increasing demand for information about NOAA research and broadening the base of support for a strong national investment in NOAA science.

The Outreach Committee is active in several areas of outreach (Public Affairs, External/Congressional Affairs, Web, University Partners and Education) and has a subcommittee or team devoted to each. In addition, the OAR programs have identified strategies for improving their constituent communications and will be receiving more information from OAR Headquarters to ensure their constituents have access to relevant information. The categories are described below.

<u>Public Affairs</u>

The Public Affairs subcommittee sees the need for greater visibility and awareness by the general public and other audiences for NOAA's research laboratories, the National Undersea Research Programs (NURP), Sea Grant, the Office of Global Programs (OGP) and the Joint Institutes. There is important work being done by these entities that needs to be made more visible, both inside and outside NOAA. The May 1999 Oklahoma tornadoes, albeit a tragedy in the loss of life and property, provided an opportunity for OAR scientists to explain the work that they do and how it contributes to the improved warning time that ultimately saved many lives. This type of awareness and education about NOAA research needs to be done on an on-going basis, not just in response to a tragedy.

Congressional/External Affairs

The External Affairs Team leads the headquarters effort in congressional activities, public affairs, constituent affairs and outreach as well as providing support and resources for activities conducted throughout OAR. This team takes the lead in OAR congressional activities and provides a wide range of services in support of those activities. These include the development of briefing materials, responses to congressional information requests, coordination with NOAA Legislative Affairs on scheduling of briefings and site visits, coordination and review of legislative materials and development of testimony. In the area of constituent affairs, staff supports OAR activities planned to work with customers to identify needs for OAR services.

Web Committee

Continuing maintenance of the OAR web site, keeping it crisp and up-to-date, is a priority of the OAR Web Site subcommittee. In addition, web site committee members are answering all inquires to the site, both on science issues and on navigating the page, which requires a significant amount of research and networking.

University Partners

The OAR Outreach subcommittee on University Partnerships has the mission of identifying and encouraging opportunities for OAR outreach components to develop improved cooperation and communication with and among outreach staff of OAR's university partners (Sea Grant Colleges, Joint/Cooperative Institutes, OGP and NURP Centers). Such closer collaboration will foster improved collective understanding and knowledge of OAR research products and services among all parties and promote wider dissemination of such information to constituents.

Constituent Communications

The importance of effectively and efficiently communicating information relating to NOAA Research is of utmost value to its constituents and the organization. The communication between OAR Laboratories and Programs and their constituents is highly variable in its quality and content and could be improved in several areas, depending on the laboratory or program. It is essential to improve the lines of communications both to and from the constituent to provide better service and ensure support for NOAA Research objectives in the long term.

Education

Work on the education subcommittee includes three types of efforts: high leverage activities including using the Internet for working with teachers and institutions; a focus on efforts with minorities and women to increase interest in science and technical careers; and expanding community-level work in school programs.

1.2 Outreach in the NOAA Strategic Plan

NOAA's mission is to describe and predict changes in the Earth's environment, and to conserve and manage wisely the Nation's coastal and marine resources to ensure sustainable economic opportunities. The steps necessary to implement this mission are outlined in the NOAA Strategic Plan for 1995-2005. The Strategic Plan identifies challenges facing NOAA over the next months and years. These functions are a major component of the *Supporting Infrastructure* as discussed in the Plan.

Supporting Infrastructure is vital to sustain NOAA and to support NOAA's programs. It also serves many constituencies besides NOAA, including other agencies of the executive branch, the legislative and judicial branches, state and local governments, academia and the private sector. NOAA conducts its strongest outreach efforts at the regional and state levels, in partnership with government agencies, tribal organizations, industry, non-profit organizations, academia, libraries, museums and community organizations in a decentralized approach.

An objective for NOAA is to improve customer service to the public, emergency managers, water resource and ecosystem management agencies, the media and private forecast planners through effective communication and utilization of NOAA's products. Weakness in any of these areas will decrease the quality of all forecasts and warnings and their subsequent benefit to the environmental, economic and physical well-being of the population. Efforts are also undertaken to educate the public and foster an understanding of and support for NOAA's strategic goals. Education is also a key element for ensuring that NOAA will have the supply of culturally diverse, trained individuals it needs to continue its dual mission of environmental stewardship/environmental prediction and assessment. OAR also has specific legislative mandates for education, including the National Sea Grant College Program [Act].

Included in the Strategic Plan are several proposed actions to implement stronger, more integrated outreach programs to meet a growing public demand for products and services related to the daily impact and broader economic effects of the oceans, coastal waters and atmosphere. The actions proposed below are consistent with the decentralized approach to outreach and are at the foundation of the FY 2000 Outreach Plan:

- Include outreach efforts to achieve management goals;
- Ensure NOAA's outreach efforts are consistent in making NOAA a source for information, data and training;
- Expand use of computer technologies and telecommunication to link targeted audiences with NOAA's education efforts; and
- Combine efforts and resources among NOAA elements conducting outreach for the greatest return on investment.

2 Public Affairs

2.1 Objectives/Goals

This public affairs plan outlines events and tasks to help promote NOAA research and increase the awareness of a variety of audiences – the general public, Congress, the media --- about the important work being done throughout OAR.

The goals for the public affairs subcommittee for FY 2000 include:

- To effectively communicate through the media to the general public the importance of the work being done in and by the OAR laboratories, the National Sea Grant College Program, NURP and OGP, as well as the joint and cooperative institutes;
- To promote NOAA Research as the lead agency for atmosphere, climate and coastal/ocean resources research; and
- To increase awareness of how NOAA research affects lives and property through understanding weather, climate and ocean systems.

2.2 Background

The Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research is a rich and varied collection of scientists and researchers investigating the range of environments from the depths of the ocean to the center of the sun. Under the NOAA Research umbrella are meteorologists, oceanographers, climate modelers and more. The work that is done by these dedicated and talented individuals affects the nation in many ways including improved forecasts of hazardous weather, better long-term climate predictions and innovative methods of living and working underwater.

However, while the bulk of the research is done through the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, many of the "products" or results of that work, are used by other offices within NOAA, such as the National Weather Service or the National Ocean Service. While this is how the organization's structure works, often the public and other audiences, such as Congress, are unaware of NOAA Research's vital role in the development of these essential services.

The three OAR public affairs officers, Barb McGehan, Keli Tarp and Jana Goldman, agree that more must be done to ensure NOAA research receives the proper credit for its contributions. Barb McGehan is the PA officer for six Boulder laboratories; Keli has the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, OK, part of the NOAA Weather Partners system with the National Weather Service; and Jana has the five remaining labs, the National Sea Grant Program, the six NURP centers, OGP and the Joint/Cooperative institutes.

The public affairs officers need the help of scientists in the OAR programs to meet OAR public affairs goals. Included in this help is advanced notice of newsworthy events as well as a willingness to participate in media events and interviews to help spread OAR messages.

The members of the Public Affairs Subcommittee are:

Jana Goldman [Acting Chair]
Barb McGehan
Barbara Shifflett
Keli Tarp

2.3 Target Audience

OAR approaches a variety of media (and they OAR), from the Wall Street Journal to Sea Technology to CNN to NPR to Native America Calling. NOAA Research's work affects everyone in the nation in some way or other. The major newspapers and television stations are intentionally targeted because their audiences are often larger. However, many local media also are well served by Public Affairs. On-line publications also offer other venues to help us get OAR stories out.

2.4 Key Messages

NOAA Research makes important contributions to society.

NOAA scientists are working on hundreds of projects large and small in the areas of climate, weather and coastal/ocean resources that affect the lives of American citizens. It would be unusual to find an area within these topics where NOAA is not involved – if not actually conducting the work, then funding it to be done elsewhere. NOAA research is the first step to improved products, such as weather forecasts, climate predictions and coastal/ocean services. It starts with us. These products are critical to help save lives and reduce property loss.

NOAA researchers have developed important forecasting tools that benefit the public.

NOAA scientists contributed to the development of the Advanced Warning Information Processing System (AWIPS) and the Next Generation Weather Radar (NEXRAD), tools which were used by forecasters during the deadly May 3 tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kansas to issue early and accurate watches and warnings to the media and the general public. While lives were lost, researchers estimate the number could have been much greater without these tools, which were part of the National Weather Service's recently completed modernization.

NOAA research helps save lives and property.
Earlier and more accurate warnings of a hurricane's expected landfall, predicting the path of a tornado and recognizing early signs of a tsunami are all vital when it comes to reducing loss of life during such natural events. NOAA research is working to provide forecasters with the operational tools necessary to help save lives and property. New forecast models, faster supercomputers and improved visualization techniques will provide forecasters with the tools they need.

2.5 Resources

The following are used to get these messages out:

– News releases
– Interviews with scientists, others
– B-roll
– Web sites, such as the NOAA and OAR homepages
– Posters
– Brochures, information packets
– Exhibits

During FY 2000 OAR will work with the Office of Public and Constituent Affairs to assess the feasibility of emerging technology, such as NOAA's new 3-D visualization studio, and exploring available technology to conduct "virtual" interviews from remote locations.

Newsletter

Several events, including employee response to the Survey Feedback Action organizational climate questionnaire, determined that communication among NOAA Research staff needed improvement. One way to do that was to publish a quarterly newsletter specifically dealing with NOAA Research people and projects. This would be a complement to the monthly NOAA Report. The newsletter, tentatively named "Samples," will go to all NOAA Research employees, as well as others interested in OAR.

Every issue of the newsletter would include an article about a person or project from each of the following: OAR laboratories, NURP, Joint Institutes, Sea Grant and OGP. Each issue would also include a column by the AA or DAA, a listing of important dates and meetings, a column about NOAA Research staff (such as awards, achievements, notable activities) and a column of information important to staff, such as transit subsidies, etc from NOAA/DOC. There would also be a regular feedback message to contact the editor with suggestions for improvement.

Production team for the newsletter would be Jana Goldman, Public Affairs Specialist as writer-editor and Karen Tolson, Secretary, as writer-layout designer. Contributions of

articles and photographs would be solicited and welcomed from staff. A tentative timeline is included in the schedule under Section 2.6. The four-page color publication would be available on hard copy for distribution and an electronic version would also be created for the OAR web site.

Press Opportunities

The AA has requested information on emerging hot issues for his use in press interactions. Program staff are requested to notify Jana Goldman, an OAR Public Affairs Officer, of this information. The Public Affairs Office is also requesting advance notice of scientists' visits to the DC area so events can be planned at the National Press Club or at other venues with the press.

2.6 Timetable/Milestones

While much of Public Affairs work responds to uncontrollable or unforseen events, there are some scheduled activities. One or more of the three Public Affairs officers will participate in the following events:

September 1999 - NEWSLETTER: Training, first draft produced

October 1999 - Cooperative Institute for Arctic Research meeting, Seattle, WA; possible Solar Max press event; NEWSLETTER: Draft reviewed by management and programs, revised by EAT

November 1999 - National Science Teachers Association regional meeting, Tulsa, OK; Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory lab review, Princeton, NJ; NEWSLETTER: First issue

December 1999 - American Geophysical Union annual meeting, San Francisco, CA

January 2000 - American Meteorological Society annual meeting, Long Beach, CA

February 2000 - American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting, Washington, DC; NEWSLETTER: Second issue

March 2000 - NOAA Research science retreat (if held) ; Tornado Conference for invited national media, Norman, OK, sponsored by NOAA/Norman; media training for some OAR staff, Live from the Storm I (7)

April 2000 - Earth Day (22), Environmental Heroes, Live from the Storm II (11)

May 2000 - Start of hurricane season press conference; National Symposium on the May 3, 1999 Tornado Outbreak, Norman, OK, sponsored by the Oklahoma Weather Center (NOAA Weather Partners/Norman and the University of Oklahoma; Space Weather Week (1-5); NEWSLETTER: Third issue; reader evaluation questionnaire

June 2000 - Ocean Day (6) possibly something with Sea Grant

August 2000 - NEWSLETTER: Fourth issue

October 2000 - Boulder Science Fair 2000, to celebrate NOAA's 30th Anniversary

NOAA will celebrate its 30th Anniversary in 2000 with various activities occurring throughout the year. Also, Jana Goldman is working with Jack Greer of Sea Grant to
develop an OAR/Sea Grant communications activity for sometime in FY 2000.

2.7 Performance Measures

How effective Public Affairs is in getting OAR message(s) out is determined in part by the amount of media coverage OAR receives. Not only is the quantity important, but the quality. Did the majors get it? Why didn't CNN cover it? Did they get the story correctly? Were NOAA/OAR people quoted? Who else is in the story (other agencies, spokespeople, etc.)? What's missing? Was understanding of the issue/project advanced? Were the goals met? OAR Public Affairs constantly reviews, along with NOAA Public Affairs downtown, what coverage is received on an event-by-event basis, e.g. hurricanes, as well as an overall view.

3 Congressional Affairs

3.1 Objectives/Goals

This Congressional Affairs plan for the second session of the 106th Congress focuses on telling the story of NOAA research. Specific topics include highlighting research results relevant to specific Congressional activities/policy concerns, working on authorizations and other proposed legislation, supporting the President's FY 2001 budget request to see that it is fully funded with the minimum of restrictions, earmarks or otherwise limiting language, and laying the groundwork for the FY 2002 request. The materials developed from this effort will explain the crux of the science using concise language and examples from "everyday life" designed for the layman so that Congress is prepared to understand the issues, science and rationale underlying proposed initiatives. These materials will make full use of graphical elements to supplement brief text information.

3.2 Background

OAR's primary legislative concerns for 2000 are support of the President's FY 2001 budget request and authorizing legislation impacting NOAA. Within the authorization language the team will seek to:

- Make sure the authorization includes the President's Budget figures that match previous authorization language;
- Avoid restrictive language that limits or terminates current programs; and
- Pay special attention to any previous Science Committee terminations in proposed authorization bills, such as VENTS, NURP and the elimination of Marine Advisory Service and education funding in Sea Grant.

The Outreach Committee members charged with these duties come from the External Affairs Team in the Budget and External Affairs (BEA) division of the Office of Management and Information. These members are:

Stephanie Harrington
Olwen Huxley [Team leader]
Christine Maloy
Michelle Reed
Mary Anne Whitcomb [Division Chief]

Work is done with support of other BEA staff as well as staff in the Office of Scientific Support, program staff and the outreach coordinators.

3.3 Target Audience

Members of Congress and their staff are the focus of the Congressional Affairs outreach effort. Although OAR has good relations with certain key Senators and Representatives, there are others with whom OAR has failed to maintain or never established contact. Historically, OAR returns to those members who are easy to brief and neglects those who present more of a challenge, either from the point of view of scheduling, personality, or interest in OAR programs. The goals, therefore, in the coming year include, in order of difficulty:

- Courtesy visits by the AA and DAA to deliver background briefings on "NOAA Research 101" for those members and staffers of the authorizing and appropriating subcommittees who are completely new to their positions, have not met the AA, or have not been familiarized with OAR programs in over two years.
- Update briefings on specific issues for those members and staffers with whom OAR has enjoyed a good history but who have not been briefed in the last year. These will be done either by the AA, the DAA or the program directors.
- Briefings for those members and staffers with whom OAR rapport is uncertain, but with whom something sounder could be established over time or at least a relationship of mutual respect, for example the House appropriations staff. These sessions will be conducted by the AA or DAA.

The determination of which appropriators and authorizors falls into which category can be made based upon the record of Congressional visits which is maintained by the External Affairs team. Meetings will be scheduled Nov-Jan 1999-2000. They should be

completed before the budget roll-out so that budget-related briefings can be conducted with a basic familiarity with NOAA Research.

For the FY 2001 budget roll-out, OAR will be assigned members of appropriations and authorization committees to do NOAA FY 2001 budget briefings during late February/early March. The External Affairs Team will begin the process of identifying specific constituents and constituent groups to support OAR issues on the Hill. The final list will be determined after OMB makes decisions on the FY 2001 budget request. Anticipated areas of thematic focus are as follows:

- Climate Services Initiative
- Sea Grant
- National Undersea Research Program
- Aquaculture
- Coral Reefs
- GEOSTORMS
- U.S. Weather Research Program

3.4 Key Messages

The key message the External Affairs Team will present is that the research NOAA does is exciting, relevant, important, top quality, legitimate and essential and should be fully funded by the U.S. government. A fundamental message of every effort will be to explain the benefits of the research.

The FY 2000 budget briefing priorities are issues that started or are carried over from the previous Congressional years. These research initiatives may require outyear funding that needs to be tracked, or have potential to remain scientifically or politically important in the new year:

- HPCC;
- GEOSTORMS; and
- Climate in the 21st Century.

Some of the other key issues Congressional Activities will be focusing on this year include:

- Climate Service Transition - Recognizing that a full climate service is not possible at the levels permitted in the FY2001 OMB request, for the translation of the research benefits achieved so far into the public arena OAR will have to effect some kind of ramp-up of budget activity in climate and related fields. Congressional Activities responsibility in this area will be the education of relevant members of Congress in these research topics and resulting advantages to the economy and public welfare of climate information.
- Cooperative Institutes - DOC has brought up the issue of openly competing the Joint Institutes when they come up for renewal. There is a need to reevaluate whether legislation is needed in this area.

TRACKING CONGRESSIONAL ADD-ONS

The OAR Presidential request is an annual target for Congressional add-ons. Recognizing that this is, in the short-term, unavoidable, the External Affairs team will work with the Office of Scientific Support, Congressional staffers and identified recipients to ensure that the funds are distributed in a timely fashion while fully complying with the NOAA grants process. A report on the status of Congressional add-ons will be maintained on a continual basis, with periodic reports being prepared to ensure that each item is on track. In the long run, Congressional Activities will examine the possibilities and opportunities to dissuade Congress from earmarking NOAA Research programs in the future.

3.5 Resources

The OAR External Affairs Team has several one-page background documents on various issues which are distributed and posted on the External Affairs web site. The most prominent of these are the Research in Your State one pagers. These pages are vital sources of regionally significant information included with briefing materials. These pages need to be updated throughout the year, with the associated dollar figures supplied from the previous fiscal year by the program budget staff after the close-out by the budget staff has been completed.

Other vehicles the External Affairs Team will be developing in FY 2000 to promote NOAA research include:

FY 2001 BUDGET ISSUES ONE PAGERS

Congressional Activities' first task after the completion of the OMB pass-back process will be to write one-pagers on all the initiatives that will be included in the President's request to Congress. Where possible these will be organized into themes of sub-initiatives. They will be written subject to review by members of the Office of Scientific Support and relevant program directors. These must be completed before the budget briefings on the Hill begin so that the AA and others may be able to distribute them to the appropriators.

HILL BRIEFINGS

Congressional Activities, in association with Legislative Affairs, will be arranging briefings on Capitol Hill. The Hill briefings on the President's FY 2001 budget request will be conducted by the AA, the DAA and other senior staff.

HILL EVENTS

Another way to increase NOAA Research visibility in Congress, is to boost the effort to contribute speakers to the USGCRP Hill seminars and other events organized by NOAA research collaborators, university partners and non-profit organizations whose mission is to promote scientific research. Some of these events can be selected months in advance; however the majority of these may be "briefings of opportunity" with only a week or a few days notice.

BROCHURE:
Congressional Activities and Public Affairs will work on the design and written material for a NOAA Research Brochure. The process to develop a brochure and related program inserts will be a long one based on recent experience. The brochure plus formatted blank pages for the inserts will be ready by FY2001.

MONTHLY REPORT:
The External Affairs team will submit a monthly report for the lab and program directors on briefings, events and hot topics. This will also serve as a tracking mechanism for Congressional Activities accomplishments.

3.6 Timetable/Milestones

November 1999 - Work begins to update Research in your state to reflect FY1999 obligations and program changes.

December 1999 - FY 2001 Budget Decisions finalized. IRI Building dedication, Dr. Baker speaking. NOAA Research in your state completed with spending figures. Begin courtesy Hill visits.

December-January 2000 - One-pagers and associated web pages prepared and approved.

January 2000 - Miami site visit

February 2000 - FY 2001 Budget release. Begin Hill budget briefings by OAR management and senior scientists. Send out budget to constituents. Begin constituent briefings on budget. Boulder site visit - Washington's Birthday recess. Take advantage of AAAS annual meeting to publicize NOAA's 30th anniversary?

March 2000 - More Hill briefings

April 2000 - Congressional Site visit to Norman, OK during Congressional recess Earth Day April 22. Take advantage of NAS annual meeting to publicize NOAA's 30th anniversary?

May 2000 - Space Weather week May 1-5. Solar Max event?
AGU meeting May 30-June 3 - Climate and Global Change celebrating its 10th year anniversary. Maybe do a Hill event? Take advantage of these activities (and/or NAS annual meeting April 29-May2) to publicize NOAA's 30th anniversary?

June 2000 - AGU meeting, continued (in DC)

July 2000 - PMEL site visit?

3.7 Performance Measures

The extent to which the goals in Congressional Affairs are accomplished is a measure of success for the External Affairs Team.

- Authorization is accomplished without restrictive language, the termination of programs or funding and with acceptable funding levels in the out-years.
- FY 2001 Budget is passed with full funding of the President's request and the minimum of earmarks that subtract from funding for NOAA Research programs' base.
- Cooperative Institutes issues are resolved with no disruption in their funding, research, or OAR relations with these important partners. Explore the possibility of enshrining the Joint Institutes in legislation.
- Briefings: Before the release of the President's budget, ensure that "NOAA Research 101" courtesy visits to some of the "first timers" have taken place with new staffers and any new members. Some indications of performance would be an increased understanding of research programs, numbers of briefings, site visit participation and materials distributed. Another important indicator is an increased number of working relationships with Congress compared to FY 1999.
- FY 2000 Budget Briefing Priorities: GFDL computer, GEOSTORMS, Climate and Global Change are adequately presented.

4 Web Site

4.1 Objectives/Goals

The OAR Web Site Subcommittee will offer a complete redesign of the OAR web site, based on the three major research foci of the reorganization. Another goal for FY 2000 is the development of software to encourage and promote better communications within all of OAR and beyond to NOAA, DOC, the Administration and the public.

4.2 Background

The OAR Web Site Subcommittee completed its first redesign of the OAR web site in November of 1998, replacing a stale and static page with a more colorful and polished site, introducing elements that keep the page fresh and current, such as "in the Spotlight" features and an OAR calendar.

Web Subcommittee Members:
(Core group)

Kevin Kelleher, NSSL, liaison to management and funding facilitator
Carol Knight, NOAA Research/OED, chairperson and facilitator
Joan O'Bannon, NSSL, webmaster and primary designer
Daphne Zaras, NSSL, assistant webmaster and designer

In addition to the core committee, others have been involved in the web subcommittee for the purpose of this most recent effort to redesign the page to reflect the reorganization of OAR, including:

Allison Soussi-Tanani, OAR, headquarters liaison

And the three OAR public affairs specialists

Jana Goldman, PA/OAR
Barb McGehan, PA/OAR Laboratories
Keli Tarp, PA/NSSL

Participation of representatives of OAR's major divisions and programs offices was sought, and they will continue to be consulted and involved. The core group participated in a face-to-face meeting in August 1999 to make plans for the coming year.

4.3 Target Audience

The public, students and educators, members of Congress and their staffs, the scientific community (including OAR university partners), NOAA, the Department of Commerce and other federal agencies.

4.4 Key Messages

Visitors to the web site will grasp the depth and breadth of NOAA research, enjoy ready access to OAR scientific data and other research products, and recognize that this research is dynamic, significant and benefits the lives of all Americans. Repeat visits will be encouraged by the frequent posting of new developments in NOAA research. The page will be easy to navigate and easy to load, and web visitors will easily be able to ask questions or offer feedback to NOAA research entities and headquarters' staff through the web site.

4.5 Resources

The webmaster is absolutely essential to the success of the redesign and on-going maintenance of the page. To ensure that this expertise is maintained OAR Headquarters will continue to pay a portion of her salary ($15,000 annually) to her employing laboratory, NSSL. Also crucial are content providers who are responsible, as part of their day-to-day duties, to funnel the latest news about NOAA research to the web committee. Initially, as key topics are determined and organizations fit in the site, the assistance of the Office of Scientific Support will be important.

4.6 Timetable/Milestones

October 1999 - Identify content providers, editors.

November 1999 - Involve OAR research entities in identifying key topics, themes and fitting each lab/program into the right themes.

December 1999 - Use NOAA Research emblem and tagline; Produce content for thematic pages: atmosphere, climate, oceans; facilitate content for laboratory/program pages.

January 2000 - Complete content editing for theme and laboratory pages.

February 2000 - Publish prototype web site redesign for OAR management input and changes.

March 2000 - Incorporate changes, publish new web site; identify web masters and begin plans for OAR web workshop later in spring.

April 2000 - Identify, implement search engine for OAR web site.

May 2000 - Facilitate web workshop for OAR webmasters.

June-September 2000 - Maintain web site, continuing to gather, edit and post features on new, exciting areas of NOAA research; regularly sweep site and remove old material.

4.7 Performance Measures

The success of the web site will be measured both by tracking the number of visitors to the site as well as by reviewing the comments and suggestions of internal and external feedback. In addition, the maintenance of the web site is of utmost importance and will be a crucial factor to track to make certain that the site presents current NOAA Research. The following measures will be in place to ensure that the site is being utilized to its fullest extent:

- Hit counters will track usage;
- Feedback will be solicited from content providers;
- Feedback will be solicited from other web site groups (i.e. Sea Grant);
- Comments submitted by users will be reviewed and incorporated if applicable; and
- The site will be reviewed periodically for currency.

5 University Partnerships

5.1 Objectives/Goals

During FY 2000, the Subcommittee will coordinate a series of three Sea Grant visits to several of the OAR Laboratories in that will incorporate an agenda and objectives modeled after the GLERL – Sea Grant March 1999 meeting. The Sea Grant visits would be involve 3-4 of the laboratories and would be structured so that Sea Grant staff would learn about laboratory research and laboratory outreach coordinators would receive feedback on outreach activities.

5.2 Background

The OAR Outreach Subcommittee on University Partnerships has the mission of identifying and encouraging opportunities for OAR outreach components to develop improved cooperation and communication with and among outreach staff of OAR's university partners (the National Sea Grant College Program, Joint /Cooperative Institutes, OGP and NURP). Such closer collaboration will foster improved collective understanding and knowledge of OAR research products and services among all parties and promote wider dissemination of such information to the end users and general public.

Subcommittee Members

Sue Borda, Sea Grant
Al Kalvaitis, NURP
Marilyn Moll, Joint /Cooperative Institutes
Mike Quigley GLERL [Subcommittee Chair]
Alex Weaver, CIRES

5.3 Target Audience

Outreach and extension staff among OAR, all partners, program managers and scientists of complimentary research and/or outreach efforts.

5.4 Key Messages

Fostering outreach partnerships between OAR and its university partners promotes sharing and leveraging of resources and a heightened effectiveness in informing all stakeholders of what OAR research does and how it benefits the nation. Moreover, improved communication with customers offers ongoing opportunities to better define their needs and produce future products and services that meet such needs.

5.5 Resources

Promote cooperative outreach efforts among OAR and its university partners through joint meetings, briefings, email and web site linkages, cooperative outreach events and publications, staff exchanges, etc.

5.6 Timetable/Milestones

October 1999 - Consult OAR Laboratories and respective OAR university partners in region (Sea Grant programs, Joint /Cooperative Institutes, NURP Centers, OGP programs). Form meeting planning committee and identify action items for members.

November 1999 - Based on results of consultation, identify meeting site(s) and begin planning process with phone conference among representatives of meeting principals

December 1999 - Develop meeting/visit objectives and agenda and begin making local arrangements. Put out request to each respective partner to submit brief summary of their mission, research and outreach activities, for incorporation in briefing book that will be distributed to all meeting/visit participants.

January 2000 - Final preparations for first meeting

February 2000 - Start Sea Grant visits at NSSL

March 2000 - Issue draft of meeting minutes and distribute for review comments

April 2000 - Issue final minutes/report

March - September 2000 - Preparation and execution of 2 other site visits

5.7 Performance Measures

Track number and nature of cooperative outreach efforts between/among OAR and its university partners. If incidence of such efforts increases, the goal is met.

6. Constituent Communications

6.1 Objectives/Goals

The importance of effectively and efficiently communicating information relating to NOAA Research is of utmost value to its constituents and the organization.

6.2 Background

A Constituent Communications Plan has been developed to assess how OAR is communicating NOAA Research to its constituents, to share information internally and externally that supports NOAA's Research and to further enhance communications with all OAR organizations. For the purpose of this exercise a constituent is *an organization, program, or individual who receives support from OAR so that it may carry out research or other activities consistent with the goals of NOAA Research.* Examples include Joint Institutes, Cooperative Institutes, Sea Grant Colleges, OGP Grantees and NURP Centers.

A questionnaire was distributed to all programs and laboratories within OAR (i.e., the OAR Laboratories; NURP, Sea Grant; OGP, International Affairs (IA), U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP), Office of Research & Technology Applications (ORTA),

and National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP)). This questionnaire was designed to analyze how OAR organizations are communicating with their constituents and identify any issues/concerns in their communication process. The OAR Constituent Communications Plan was then based on the reported issues and strategies proposed by individual labs and programs.

Questions posed to OAR organizations included:

- Who are your constituents?
- What information goes out to your constituents (i.e., research topics, policy issues, budget and/or programmatic issues, etc.)?
- What is the communication process (i.e., meetings, reviews, internet, email, etc.)?
- What information do your constituents need or do not need?
- What kind of feedback do you receive from your constituents on how you communicate to them?
- What improvements in the communications process need to be made?
- What is your strategy/plan to improve this communications process?

The OAR organizations have provided general ideas/strategies on what they will be doing in FY 2000 to improve constituent communications. These strategies will be continuously evolving as organizations change and adjust their communication processes with their constituents.

6.3 Target Audience

OAR's current constituency includes the Sea Grant Institutions, Joint Institutes, Cooperative Institutes, OGP Grantees, NURP Centers, and other research organizations and agencies.

6.4 Key Messages

The communication between OAR Laboratories and Programs and their constituents is highly variable in its quality and content and could be improved in several areas, depending on the laboratory or program. It is essential to improve the lines of communications both to and from the constituent to provide better service and ensure support for NOAA Research objectives in the long term.

6.5 Resources

Constituent communications is carried out on an informal basis e.g., email and telephone, as well as on a formal basis. Proposal processes and reviews constitute a significant portion of the formal communication process. In addition there are briefings,

publications, postings on web sites, conference calls, workshops, regional and national meetings, listserves on the Internet, etc.

6.6 Constituent Communications Strategies

OAR Headquarters

Based on a review of the responses to the questionnaire, OAR Headquarters plans to develop and periodically update a list of constituents from all programs. At a minimum, OAR Headquarters will send its constituents copies of the quarterly newsletter, the President's budget, updates to the NOAA strategic plan and copies of the annual report. In addition, OAR constituents will be queried periodically as to whether they want to continue to receive this information, want additional information, etc.

Research Laboratories/Office of Scientific Support

Constituents: Joint and Cooperative Institutes

Current communications: OSS believes that it has clear lines of communication in place to convey information to the JIs once it is received at the OSS/JI Program Manager level. The Joint Institute Program has been very successful at internal communication once it receives information that may be useful to all of the Institutes.

Issues/concerns: Better communication at the OAR headquarters level between External Affairs and OSS would ensure more broad-based communication to the Joint Institutes.

Strategy: OSS plans to determine what budget information, general research updates, and NOAA developments would be useful to the JI's. The Outreach/OSS representative, Marilyn Moll, will then be instrumental in getting the information to the JI Director for dissemination.

NURP

Constituents: National Undersea Research Centers, Scientific community

Current communications: The NURP Headquarters office sends out to the Centers a science document that the Centers, in turn, announce to the science community. This results in proposals that are peer reviewed and incorporated in each Center's omnibus proposal. Information that goes out to NURP's Constituents involves budgetary and programmatic information. NURP uses site visits to Constituents to participate in the science review, discuss the NURP service plan and identify better methods of communicating.

Issues/concerns: NURP Centers indicated that they do not want information that isn't relevant or pertinent. They do want advance warning on funding opportunities from NOAA and other Federal agencies related to marine and ocean research.

Strategy: A monthly, short (~30 min) conference call. A brief, web-based newsletter developed by each Center and NURP. [Note: Each NURP Center establishes and develops their own Constituent communication outreach plans and is responsible to implement such plans.]

Sea Grant
Constituents: Sea Grant Institutions

Current communications: The National Sea Grant Office (NGSO) sends the Network information such as policy documents and evaluation procedures when they are developed or changed. The Network receives notification of nationally-funded grants for coastal and marine resource research, outreach and education and procedures for applying for those grants via email and postings on the internet as the need arises. Day-to-day requests for information are handled through email or by fax or telephone.

Issues/concerns: Information that might be of use to the Sea Grant Network includes: information and access to NOAA strategic planning, Congressional activities, general budget information, and NOAA research impacts. This information should be transmitted when it is current. One of the barriers to effective communications can also be the size of the program.

Strategy: To speed the process of communication and to make distribution easier, the NSGO will be making more of its material available on the web.

International Activities (IA)
Constituents: IA's key Constituents are the State Department (DOS), Agency for International Development (AID), the science community, national and international research organizations, and the NOAA/OAR program offices (i.e., Sea Grant & NURP).

Current communications: IA sends out broadcasts (email & memorandum) to the research community informing them of topic-specific activities and opportunities which they may want to take advantage of. Scientists from various science and research organizations contact IA directly to identify potential areas of joint research. Many times, scientists approach IA based on referrals from other scientists. IA interacts with the Department of State on a routine basis, both formally and informally. Formal interagency meetings and briefings are held to ensure effective communication and preparation for bilateral meetings on specific research topics.

Issues/concerns: Feedback from Constituents is that they do not want to be: a) left out or ignored, if there is interest; b) pushed into a corner, and forced to do senseless drills; c) taxed with unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy, and d) caught in a structure that it too rigid and restrictive.

IA would like to see more OAR Headquarters visibility and participation in program reviews, and more interest/communication in what OAR Headquarters does and how IA can apply it to their programs. IA also would like to participate more in OAR sponsored research events and gatherings. They also want to have the opportunity to demonstrate to other OAR organizations that they have valuable partnerships that are part of the NOAA Research picture.

Strategy: More discussion with laboratories on present activities through lab reviews and site visits to further understand the work being carried out in the laboratories to become "laboratory liaisons" to the global community. IA has had little interaction with the JIs over the years, and is currently trying to define what the international needs of the JI's are, and how IA will be able to serve/support them.

Outreach plans for FY 2000 also include the development of an IA web site that will include program summaries, contact information (internal and external), and administrative information such as preparation of Country Clearance Cable, IAP-66, and MOU/As.

U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP)
Constituents: NOAA, NSF, the Navy, NASA, NCAR, and university weather researchers.

Current communications: Information that goes out to the USWRP's constituents includes the weather forecasting goals of the USWRP, weather associated socio-economic impacts, the USWRP annual operating plan, the program office budget, annual reports from other working groups under the USWRP, and reports on the progress and status of the USWRP. The primary mechanism for distributing this information is through their web site.

Strategy: USWRP will continue to frequently maintain their web site.

ORTA (Office of Research & Technology Applications (ORTA)
Constituents: DOC scientists, small businesses, the Small Business Administration, and state SBIR (Small Business Innovative Research) program managers.

Current Communications: ORTA carriers out the provisions of the SBIR program by disseminating solicitation information on how to submit proposals for research and

funding opportunities. Site visits allow for the opportunity to learn how the DOC SBIR program can be more helpful in advancing innovation and commercialization of NOAA Research.

Issues/concerns: The SBIR process works well and had led to program improvement throughout the 15 year history of the DOC/SBIR program. The program manager is responsible for handling any communication issues.

Strategy: The SBIR program plans to improve service and enhance outreach efforts. Some mechanisms to accomplish this include:

- Simplification or enhancements will be made each year to the annual soliciation and application forms;
- New or broader research topics will be added annually to provide additional opportunities for small businesses;
- Updated presentations and handouts will be made for each of the three National SBIR Conferences;
- Modifications will be made to screening, review, and selection procedures as changing environment dictates, but generally on an annual basis;
- contact with NIST and NOAA lab personnel will be increased to improve understanding of research needs and contract monitoring problems; and
- Increased outreach to under-represented states and minority and women-owned businesses.

National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP)

Constituents: NOAA, EPA, DOE, DOI, USDA, NASA and a limited number of contractors and grantees.

Current communications: Workshops and conferences are used to identify emerging issues of acidic deposition.

Strategy: An effective NAPAP Home Page will be developed, depending on resources. Electronic versions of NAPAP reports are being developed.

OGP

No information was received from OGP.

SAB

No information was received from SAB.

6.7 Performance Measures

The overall success of the plan will be measured by the consistency and quality of the communications between the OAR Laboratories and Programs and their constituents as well as the openness of the Laboratories and Programs for feedback. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the progress and obstacles of the individual laboratories and programs.

7 Education

Education is an important part of the Outreach Plan, and one way NOAA can provide community outreach to promote a scientifically literate society and win public support for research. Education is also a key element for ensuring that NOAA will have the supply of trained individuals it needs to continue to fulfill its mission.

7.1 Objectives/Goals

Admittedly ambitious, the primary objectives for the Education Subcommittee in FY 2000 are:

- Update/upgrade the Educational Web site;
- Complete the OAR education posters;
- Adopt a school (or school district) in S. Florida, Boulder and Maryland;
- Attend the 2000 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) meeting and prepare for OAR education presentation at the Teacher Institute in the Summer of 2000 (dependent on funding and whether or not the proposed educational specialist position is filled);
- Provide support for OAR Outreach Committee educational initiatives (i.e. Climate Bowl);
- Seek opportunities for participation in joint educational outreach activities with Sea Grant offices; and
- Develop a prototype of an educational module on a topic to be chosen in collaboration with interested labs. The work will be coordinated by John Schmidt and will be based on existing materials developed by teachers in the laboratories.

Before work can begin or continue on each topic, the committee wishes to obtain approval from the relevant Lab Director and a commitment that the lab will designate a scientific point of contact and an educational point of contact. Other labs will be included upon a request from the Lab Director. The primary delivery mechanism will be the Web.

Aims are to use National Science Standards (content portion) with the activities so that teachers can easily coordinate essential science content and OAR Web activities. The

modules will incorporate methods for students to measure (self test) how well they are learning the content.
Suggested topics for the educational module are:

- Greenhouse gases (CMDL),
- "Regions of the atmosphere", ozone in the atmosphere (AL),
- Tsunamis, seismic studies, underwater acoustics, 3-D visualizations (PMEL),
- Sunspots and space weather (SEC),
- Climate modeling (GFDL), and
- Ocean acoustics, physical oceanography or ocean chemistry (1 of the 3) (AOML).

7.2 Background

The mission of the educational outreach team is to coordinate, improve and focus national OAR educational efforts. By doing so OAR creates an increased awareness of earth science in general and an understanding, awareness and constituency for NOAA's scientific mission.

Education Subcommittee Members

Barbara Poppe, SEC
Jorgeann Hiebert, ETL
Rhonda Lange, FSL
John Schmidt, OAR [FY 2000 Subcommittee Chair]
Evan B. Forde, AOML [FY 99 Subcommittee Chair]
Anthony Tafoya, EEO

Others consulted for this plan:

University of Miami/Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences outreach coordinator;
Sea Grant Extension agent for Miami-Dade County;
Miami-Dade County School system science administrators;
Teachers in the Boulder and South Florida area;
Member of the Education Department at the University of South Carolina;
Web-based input based on requests for assistance; and
Telephone calls and other requests for information and support from professional educators, students and parents.

7.3 Target Audience

Professional educators, K-12 youth and their families**.**

7.4 Key Messages

- NOAA is the ocean/atmosphere research agency for the federal government
- Earth Science careers are fulfilling and fun
- Science is fun
- NOAA wants to be a resource for science educators

7.5 Resources

Labs will be asked to identify points of contact (one scientific, one education). This means some time commitment. Because of the responsiveness to "customer" feedback and systematic efforts to update the pages with the most current information, there has been an ever-increasing number of hits for the OAR education web page.

7.6 Timetable/Milestones

[* Note that some of the activities depend on the proposed educational specialist position in Boulder being filled.]

October 1999 - Hire graphics artist at AOML; Begin systematic update -- "science technology" Identify additional OAR personnel for this; Initial meeting with schools; Discuss plans for prototype module with labs; *Discuss institute concept with universities in Boulder, Seattle, Miami, Norman and with NSF; and Recruit one Sea Grant Educator for the OAR Education Committee.

November 1999 - Complete outlines, sketches, rough drafts, "cartoon char;" Continue to update and develop instructional design using Dreamweaver Attain and Authorware; Identify scientists willing to answer questions from schools and inform schools; Begin outline for prototype module; *Action based on discussions in October - the identified leader will write plan and solicit support. ($5,000 OAR required for each Summer Workshop); and Publish first "NOAA Biscayne Bay Science Facts" with Miami Dade Sea Grant.

December 1999 - Posters reviewed, print full-sized samples; Check and update links and add Weather Section; Provide judges for science fairs at schools and continue scientist Q&A; Write production schedule and plan for prototype module; *Implement institute plan - Identify resources and personnel at Boulder and/or Seattle, Norman or Miami; and Joint Sea Grant OAR Edu. page on web site.

January 2000 - Revise/refine posters, submit to HQ for approval; Complete transfers of any identified excess property to schools; Build prototype module; *Implement institute plan - Consult personnel who will implement in Boulder – University and OAR people - and identify teachers; and Continue discussions with Sea Grant.

February 2000 - Begin printing procurement; Guest scientist 1 in schools; Continue to build prototype module; and *Implement institute plan - Agenda

complete, Space reserved, Scientists and University Educators scheduled, and teachers invited.

March 2000 - Print posters; Guest scientist 2 in schools; Internal review on prototype module; and *Implement institute plan -Monitor, receive RSVP for sessions from teachers.

April 2000 - Begin poster distribution at NSTA; Guest scientist 3 and delivery of posters to schools; Revise prototype module; *Implement institute plan - Continue preparations; and AA to give major talk at NSTA on space weather.

May 2000 - Distribute posters as requested; Finalize prototype module and *begin outline for second module; and notify and schedule institute attendees.

June 2000 - Distribute posters as requested; *Write production schedule and plan for Module 2; and *Monitor institute preparations.

July 2000 - Distribute posters as requested; *Build Module 2; and *Institute -- 2 weeks

August 2000 - Distribute posters as requested; and *Evaluate prototype module, Continue to Build Module 2.

September 2000 - Distribute posters as requested; and Plan for FY 2001.

7.7 Performance Measures

The success of the Education Subcommittee will be measured on the basis of their progress on each of their individual goals.

- Educational Education Web site - The success of the web site will be measured by tracking the number of users and by reviewing the feedback of both internal and external users. (Content providers, educators, Sea Grant Education Committee, users, etc.)
- OAR education posters - The success of the posters will be measured by tracking their distribution and reviewing feedback of those who use them.
- Adoption of a school (or school district) in S. Florida, Boulder and Maryland - These programs will be reviewed and feedback will be solicited from the schools themselves to determine the benefits/problems for both OAR and the school.
- Presence at the 2000 NSTA meeting and OAR education presentation at the Teacher Institute in the Summer of 2000 - Educator interest and follow-up on the materials provided will be analyzed to determine how the materials were used and what could be improved upon.
- OAR Outreach Committee educational initiatives (i.e. Climate Bowl) - Feedback will be solicited to determine participation in initiatives and how materials were used and what could be improved upon.
- Joint educational outreach activities with Sea Grant offices - The development of joint activities will indicate success in this area. The success of the projects will be determined by user feedback.

- Educational module(s) on topics in collaboration with interested labs - Feedback will be solicited from users to determine relevancy and usefulness of modules.